

INTELLOFAX 18

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY USSR (Georgian SSR)

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SUBJECT Tbilisi Aircraft Plant

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This report is a reply to requests for further information on the subject.

1. Three jet fighters daily were produced in September 1948.
2. The fuselages were constructed of aluminum spar and pressed aluminum shells. There were four main spars, 4 to 5 cm in diameter, with a network of thin aluminum tubing between them, which were welded to the main spars. These tube frames were covered with aluminum shells which were fastened at first with leather straps somewhat thicker than leather boot laces. The PWs used these straps for shoe laces. (1)
- 25X1X 3. [REDACTED] did not know the exact wing construction, but believed that there was a U-spar with many aluminum ribs fastened to it.
4. Almost all automatic lathes used at the plant were of German make.
- 25X1X 5. Other PWs [REDACTED] aluminum sheets were cold-shaped soon after completion of the cooling process. (2) Parts of aircraft wrecks were recast in the aluminum smeltery, which was equipped with only one oil-burning furnace. Smelting temperature was 700 Centigrade. Melting time was 30 minutes.
6. The castings were air-hardened. The outer aluminum covering was 3 to 4 mm thick. (3)
7. Chemical tanks were not observed.
8. The aluminum in storage was white and had no green or brown coating.
9. A PW who was assigned to loading work estimated the weight of a jet engine at 600 pounds. Its length was about 2 meters and its height, 1 to 1.2 meters.

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10. The jet fighters could fly for 45 minutes. A rocket located under the fuselage was used as a JATO unit. This device developed white smoke until the plane had reached an altitude of about 300 meters. (4)
11. Electrical and radio equipment, and armament and instruments were not produced in the plant but arrived by rail from the Ural district.
- 25X1X 12. [REDACTED] eight men disassemble a jet fighter in 1½ hours. (5) The disassembled plane was loaded on a transport van which greatly resembled the transport van for gliders which had been used by the National Socialist Aviation Corps (NSFK). (6)
13. Mess kits, made of sheet aluminum, were used in the plant. It is not definitely known whether they were produced there.

25X1A [REDACTED] Comments:

- (1) From the description of the construction of the fuselage it is inferred that the four main spars consisted of welded tubing and that the welded aluminum ribs were used to fasten the outer covering. The wings seem to have been constructed in a similar way.
- (2) This indicates the utilization of standard annealing bathes for duraluminum and a subsequent cold-shaping. Source could not clarify the application of the aluminate process.
- (3) [REDACTED] estimate of the thickness of the sheet aluminum is not given much credence.
- (4) The information concerning the use of a JATO unit fitted under the fuselage is doubted. This observation was reported for the first time, while 40 to 50 sources previously interrogated saw no JATO units or denied the use of JATOs. It is believed that the JATO unit possibly has been confused with a jet engine fitted under the fuselage.
- (5) Disassembly of this type aircraft was reported by many sources to have been accomplished by four or five men in 2 to 3 hours.
- (6) The report essentially confirms previous information. See [REDACTED]

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25X1A [REDACTED] Comment: [REDACTED]

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